

Interaction Paper - Rynkiewich Chapter 3 “Language, Symbols, and Cross-Cultural Communication”

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages, through verbal and nonverbal expressions.

The author introduced the constructivist view of communication which suggested that communication is project shared by speaker and listener, an ongoing project of constructing meaning during dialogue, then deconstructing the meaning, and then building it up again. Communication is not limited to language, for instance, facial expressions and body gestures are used in conversation. In the field of intercultural communication, the author points out some body signs carried out different meaning in a different cultural society. Furthermore, in a different situation, people speak different forms of language, i.e., formal, or informal English. It is a long-term project to translate the Bible in the cross-cultural field. Wycliffe Bible Translators typically take twenty years from beginning to learn an unwritten and undescribed language to having a full New Testament translation in hand.

Recently in my church’s missionary seminar I heard a missionary couple’s testimony. The female missionary Ester is a Korean American woman, she moved to Turkey with her husband, a Turkish missionary. Ester spent one and a half year to study Turkish language in school and then practice speaking Turkish in supermarket, bus station, etc. It is amazing to me that Ester has Korean as mother language and learned English as a second language and then for the sake of missionary, she learned the third language Turkish in order to share the Gospel.

Two questions for further engaging this topic: 1. What is the communication process? 2. What is nonverbal communication?